



ALASKA WIC VENDOR TRAINING NEWSLETTER

State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services
Office of Children's Services
Family Nutrition Services / WIC Program
Internet: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/nutri/WIC>

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Please post this where
it will be seen and read by
employees.
This newsletter serves as
required vendor
training.



WIC Vendor Training Requirements

Upon authorization as a WIC vendor, a store agrees to accept and provide training to their staff on WIC Program requirements. Federal regulations require mandatory annual training for vendors and cashiers. Training can include the use of videos, newsletters, and brochures. In addition, at least one vendor representative must participate in an interactive training once every three (3) years, provided by State WIC staff and/or Local Agency staff at a conference, via teleconference, or during a monitoring visit.

This coming twelve months, the State WIC staff will offer four teleconference sessions. Each session will be offered twice covering two of the required topics. The topics will coincide with the most recent newsletter, but will go into greater detail and include discussion.

The first training session will cover the Purpose of the WIC Program and the Complaint Process and will be held January 10th and 12th, 9am - 10am. Dates and topics for future trainings will be announced in future newsletters.

Vendors that have not met the required interactive training within the last three years, may be required to have at least one representative attend each of the four sessions. All vendor staff is encouraged to participate.

Registration is required. A registration form with details was mailed with this newsletter. Please call 465-3100 for additional information or to receive another registration form.

Q & A

What should be done if a WIC customer becomes abusive or threatens store personnel?

- ♦ Contact the local or state WIC agency.
- ♦ Fill out a vendor complaint form (provided in the Vendor Manual) and send it to the local or state WIC agency.
- ♦ Contact local law enforcement if necessary

Complaint will be reviewed and appropriate action taken. The following actions may be taken:

- ♦ Additional client education.
- ♦ Verbal or written warning to client.
- ♦ Client sanctions such as disqualification from the WIC program for a designated amount of time, legal charges or repayment of improperly obtained benefits.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- **January 10 & 12, 2006, 9:00am - 10:00am**
Vendor Teleconference Training (Registration Required)
- **February 2006 -**
Next Newsletter





What is WIC?

- ♥ "WIC" is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children.
- ♥ WIC is a federal health program funded by a grant from the USDA Food & Nutrition Service.

- ♥ In Alaska, the Dept. of Health & Social Services administers the WIC grant.
- ♥ 17 Local Agencies provide WIC services throughout Alaska.

Purpose of the WIC Program

- ♥ Promotes optimum health and nutrition for pregnant women, new mothers (breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding) infants and children.
- ♥ Provides free nutritious food, nutrition education and health referrals to participants who meet income guidelines and have a nutritional risk.

Health and Nutrition Benefits of the WIC Program

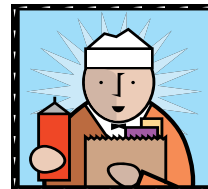
- ♥ Improves health and nutrition for families.
- ♥ Influences positive, lifetime nutrition and health behaviours.
- ♥ Provides nutrition education.
- ♥ Promotes healthier families.
- ♥ Promotes breastfeeding.
- ♥ Provides nutritious foods for good growth and development.
- ♥ Provides health and social services referrals.

Results of the WIC Program

- ♥ Reduces low birth rate and infant mortality.
- ♥ Reduces incidence of anemia.
- ♥ Improves diet.
- ♥ Helps healthy children be ready for school.
- ♥ Improves immunization rates.
- ♥ Saves health care dollars.

Role of the WIC Vendor

Vendors are valued partners in the delivery of WIC services to participants. Vendors are required to keep a minimum quantity of WIC-approved foods in stock at all times.



WIC Clients and Customers

- ♥ Women, infants and children.
- ♥ Caregivers of children and infants, including dads and partners.
- ♥ Foster parents.
- ♥ Grandparents and others who are helping the family.

WIC Approved Foods

The types and quantities of foods authorized for the WIC Program are specified in federal regulations. These foods have been chosen because they are high in protein, iron, Vitamin D, Vitamin C, Vitamin A and Calcium.

Each state develops a food list that specifies the TYPE of foods and/or BRAND approved for its WIC Program. Other considerations may include: regional preferences, availability throughout the state, package sizes and competitive pricing.

WIC provides specific brands of infant formula because WIC receives rebates from formula manufacturers. These rebates along with other cost containment measures, such as Alaska's "Least Expensive Brand" Policy, allow more Alaskans to participate in the Program.

Benefits of a local store being an Authorized Vendor

- ♥ Encourages WIC participants to shop locally.
- ♥ Greater convenience and choice for participants.
- ♥ Contributes to healthier communities.
- ♥ Increased sales at the store.

Complaints Against WIC Vendors

If a WIC participant feels a vendor has violated Program rules, such as inadequate stock of WIC items or poor customer service, they may report complaints against WIC vendors to the local or state WIC agency. They may make their complaints verbally or in writing.

Complaints will be reviewed and follow-up will depend on the nature of the complaint. The following actions may be taken:

- ◆ Verbal and/or written technical assistance may be provided by local or state WIC staff.
- ◆ Store personnel may be required to attend additional training to improve vendor compliance.
- ◆ A store monitoring visit or compliance buy may be conducted.
- ◆ Vendor sanctions such as penalty points, civil money penalties, probation or disqualification from the WIC Program.

Whenever possible, complaints will be resolved informally by the local agency.

Civil Rights

Vendors and participants may make discrimination complaints verbally or in writing. They may make the complaints to their local agency, directly to the state agency, or directly to the USDA. The state agency Civil Rights Coordinator will oversee any complaints of alleged discrimination.

Vendor Staff Contact Information

Vendor Coordinator, Christine Kelly (907) 465-8630
chris_kelly@health.state.ak.us
Ass't Vendor Coordinator, Diane VanEpps (907) 465-4704
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Admin Clerk, Vacant (907) 465-3388

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